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Chairman: Mr. Choi ..... (Republic of Korea)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda items 85 to 105 (*continued*)

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

Mr. Widhya (Cambodia): First of all, allow me, on behalf of my delegation, to warmly congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chairman, as well as to congratulate the members of the First Committee. We are sure that with your political experience and diplomatic skill you will lead our Committee to achieve new successes. I would also like to take this opportunity to sincerely congratulate the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Nobuyasu Abe, for his important contributions to various disarmament and security issues. I also would like to associate my delegation with the statement made by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Cambodia has always been committed to the cause of international peace and security. We strongly believe in multilateralism, that is, that regional and international peace and security should be ensured through a multilateral architecture.

It is indeed discouraging to see that there has been no significant progress towards the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons. In that connection, despite the recent omission of the section on disarmament and non-proliferation in the outcome document of the High-level Plenary Meeting — which constitutes a real setback — Cambodia believes that Members States must carry on with their efforts to analyse the various disarmament issues in the light of the current international situation.

We look to the Organization and to this Committee to continue providing the necessary forum where Member States can create the international atmosphere needed to appropriately address the challenges complete disarmament entails. It has already been proven that strengthened multilateralism will enhance the role of the United Nations in global affairs. For that reason, all of us should work together in the spirit of multilateralism to strengthen global norms in order to collectively eliminate threats to peace and security.

There are two important tools for building a peaceful and stable world, namely, disarmament and development. By controlling conditions that increase the likelihood of armed conflicts, resources can be freed and allocated for other activities such as economic and social development. Concurrently, sound development policies and strategies will play a significant role in efforts to eradicate poverty, promote economic growth and, in the long run, create an environment conducive to long-term security.

As we participate in this debate, I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate Cambodia's unequivocal commitment to the noble goals of general and complete disarmament. That commitment stems from the misery and suffering that Cambodians had to

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endure for 24 long years. Cambodia is firmly convinced that more weapons will not make the world more secure. Disarmament, like any other item on our agenda today, cannot be dealt with in isolation; there is an urgent need for disarmament to be addressed at all levels — national, regional and international.

For those reasons, the Kingdom of Cambodia ratified the Chemical Weapons Convention on 19 July 2005. Cambodia supports the strengthening of international law, which, inter alia, includes the major instruments to curb the arms race such as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We are dismayed and deeply concerned about the inability of the recent NPT Review Conference to achieve any results. Similarly, we regret the failure to reach consensus on these very crucial issues in the outcome document of the High-level Plenary Meeting. Cambodia profoundly believes in the necessity for and benefits of disarmament.

While Cambodia has enjoyed peace and a return to normalcy, our people still have to contend with the legacy of landmines and unexploded ordnance left over from past wars and conflicts. The Royal Government aims to clear Cambodia of all landmines by 2012. Furthermore, in addition to the eight Millennium Development Goals adopted by the United Nations, our Government has adopted landmine clearance as an additional Millennium Development Goal for Cambodia.

The growing gap between rich and poor is fuelling inequality. The continuation of that quandary will inevitably provide additional fuel for conflicts. Because small arms are easy to use and readily available, they have become the weapons of choice for today's combatants. As a post-conflict country, Cambodia fully understands the importance of the proper and systematic collection, destruction, and registration of small arms and light weapons. Our Government has conducted six national projects to achieve those goals, and has undertaken efforts to ensure the safe storage of small arms and light weapons and to search for hidden stockpiles.

Special emphasis has been given to a "weapons for development" programme, in which incentives are offered to communities to report illegal stockpiles and cooperate in their collection and destruction. Incentives include improved educational facilities and provision of appropriate agricultural tools. As a result, more than a 100,000 small arms have been collected and destroyed. In addition, nationwide awareness programmes were conducted to appeal for public participation.

The Royal Government of Cambodia has also embarked on a legislative campaign to control small arms and explosives. Specifically, on 26 April 2005, the National Assembly adopted a law on the management of weapons, explosives and ammunition, which establishes rules for supply, transportation, repair and production of weapons, explosives, and ammunition, as well as penalties for non-compliance. Moreover, the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, has also been submitted to the Council of Ministers and on to the National Assembly awaiting for ratification.

We realize, as do many others, the necessity of strengthening multilateral efforts to promote disarmament and non-proliferation, as there is an increasing need for multilateralism to become more assertive and proactive within the changing dynamics of international security. Furthermore, efforts at the bilateral, subregional and regional levels should continue to be pursued in parallel with a multilateral approach. It will take the concerted efforts of all of us to ensure that the world becomes a safer place to live in, now and the future.

Mr. Kittikhoun (Lao People's Democratic Republic): We congratulate you, Sir, and are confident that, with your great experience and skills, you will guide the work of our Committee to a successful conclusion.

We also would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Ambassador Luis Alfonso de Alba, Permanent Representative of Mexico to the international organizations in Geneva, for the excellent manner in which he guided the work of the Committee during the fifty-ninth session.

We align ourselves fully with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the statement to be delivered by the representative of Myanmar on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). However, we would like to highlight some

points important to us on the issue of disarmament and international security.

This session is taking place on the occasion of the sixtieth anniversary of the United Nations. What has the United Nations, as the only universal multilateral organization, accomplished in the field of disarmament and international security? A candid and honest overview of the global situation in that field is required for the purpose not only of taking stock, but also for developing joint and collective measures to remedy the situation and advance further in promoting the noble cause of disarmament.

Today, our world is still filled with insecurity and injustice. Armed conflicts, acts of aggression and violence, terror, interference in the internal affairs of States, ethnic strife, civil wars, hunger, disease and poverty are the major threats to international peace and security. Weapons of mass destruction also pose a great danger to the very survival of humankind. To ensure enduring global peace and security, we must together exert all-out efforts and act collectively to address and overcome those challenges. One cannot seek security for oneself alone; only a collective approach can bring about positive results, including in the field of international arms control and disarmament.

The world summit held two weeks ago adopted an outcome document that, to our regret, omitted the issue of disarmament and non-proliferation. That was an opportunity missed at a crucial moment for the world community to give direction and to address the critical issues confronting us all. In that regard, the Lao People's Democratic Republic cannot but share the disappointment of the peaceloving community at that critical omission. We must therefore, at this session, reaffirm the need to uphold multilateralism and work for multilaterally agreed solutions, the only efficient method of addressing disarmament and world security issues.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic remains concerned about the danger of weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons, which constitute a threat not just to international peace and security, but to the very existence of life on the planet. In that regard, we regret that the Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), held in May, was unable to reach consensus on the substantive questions surrounding the three pillars of the NPT. We are of the view that commitments to the NPT should be lived up to by States parties and that the NPT should remain a cornerstone of global nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear technology.

Recognizing the importance of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which contributes to the process of nuclear disarmament, the Lao People's Democratic Republic deposited an instrument of ratification of the Treaty with the United Nations in October 2000 and has actively participated in the seminars organized by the Provisional Technical Secretariat of the Preparatory Commission for the CTBT Organization in the region. That shows our strong commitment to nuclear disarmament and to the creation of a world free from the nuclear threat. In that context, we welcome the convening of the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT, held in New York from 21 to 23 September. We also welcome the adoption by the Conference of the Final Declaration and measures to promote the entry into force of the CTBT. In that regard, in order to make the Treaty effective, we deem it necessary for all States that have not done so — and in particular the nuclear-weapon States — to sign and ratify the Treaty.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic strongly believes that the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones is a positive, helpful step towards the goal of nuclear disarmament and freeing humankind from nuclear weapons. In that spirit, we welcome the convening of the Conference of States Parties and Signatories of Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones, held in Mexico from 26 to 28 April 2005. We also welcome and support the strong aspirations of peoples in many parts of the world in their efforts towards the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones. We underscore that the total achievement of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation is important to enhancing international peace and security. As a State party to the Bangkok Treaty establishing the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, the Lao People's Democratic Republic has done its best to contribute to ASEAN's common efforts in that respect.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic remains of the view that the absolute and most credible guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is the total elimination of nuclear weapons. We believe that only the total elimination of nuclear

weapons can prevent terrorists from acquiring them. We therefore welcome all efforts at the international, regional and national levels aimed at reducing and eliminating nuclear weapons. In that regard, we are of the view that urgent consideration must be given to the conclusion of a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument on security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States. It is our delegation's hope that the ASEAN-sponsored draft resolution initiated by Myanmar on nuclear disarmament will be given considerable support by all Member states, especially the nuclear-weapon States.

Like many other delegations, the Lao People's Democratic Republic very much regrets that the Conference on Disarmament — the only multilateral disarmament forum for deliberation and negotiation on questions related to arms control and disarmament agreements — has again failed to agree on a programme of work this year. We hope that all parties concerned will redouble their efforts, demonstrate the necessary flexibility and move forward in their efforts to pursue both nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation.

The failure of the United Nations Disarmament Commission to agree on an agenda for its session this year is another setback to multilateral disarmament efforts. In that context, we urge that the multilateral disarmament machinery should be strengthened so that it can move the process forward to overcome the deadlock.

Although the United Nations has achieved only mixed progress in all areas of activity during the past 60 years, including in the field of disarmament and international security, there should be no room for despair and discouragement. If we are to succeed, our joint mission must be to move forward. Therefore, one of the most urgent tasks at the United Nations is to work seriously together towards the common objective of achieving general and complete disarmament, in particular nuclear disarmament. Disarmament cannot be fully achieved without the political will and support of all United Nations Members. It is time that we spare no effort to get the disarmament process back on track, move forward and build a world of peace and equitable development — a world free from nuclear weapons. On that note, I wish the present session of our Committee great success.

Mrs. Laohaphan (Thailand): Allow me at the outset to join other delegations in congratulating you, Mr. Chairman, and other members of the Bureau on your election.

My delegation wishes to associate itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and with the statement to be made later by the representative of Myanmar on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

Last year in this room, many delegations, including mine, expressed concerns over the slow pace of disarmament, the violations of non-proliferation commitments and the threat of weapons of mass destruction falling into the hands of terrorists. We had hoped that the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly and the year 2005 — the so-called year of United Nations reform — would offer a renewed phase of cooperation.

What has happened throughout the year unfortunately tells us another story. Not only did we witness the failure of the once-in-half-a-decade Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), we also failed to include in the summit outcome document (resolution 60/1) any measures to strengthen the disarmament and non-proliferation regime. In addition, the impasses in the Conference on Disarmament and the United Nations Disarmament Commission remain unresolved. My delegation would like to stress once again that in order to overcome those deadlocks, both disarmament and non-proliferation should be addressed in a constructive and balanced manner. We — both nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States — have a shared responsibility to carry out our roles in disarmament and non-proliferation.

With regard to development and disarmament, my delegation notes with concern the continued growth of global military expenditures at the expense of resources that could have been used for development. In his recent report on the work of the Organization (A/60/1), the Secretary-General alerts us to the fact that global military expenditures exceeded $1 trillion in 2004 and are projected to keep rising. The relationship between disarmament and development is obvious to us. We therefore support the central role of the United Nations in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. We also encourage the international

community to contribute to economic and social development the resources made available as a result of disarmament and arms limitation agreements.

Concerning weapons of mass destruction, Thailand has a firm policy not to develop, possess, acquire, proliferate, test or transfer nuclear weapons or related materials. Thailand attaches high importance to the implementation of its obligations as a State party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC), as well as to a number of bilateral, regional and multilateral efforts and agreements on non-proliferation, including through the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the South-East Asian region.

With regard to the threat of weapons of mass destruction falling into the hands of terrorists, Thailand supports the implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and has provided its full cooperation to other friendly countries in opposing nuclear proliferation and illicit trafficking and in strengthening capacity-building with regard to export controls.

In that regard, my delegation welcomes the adoption by the General Assembly of the long-negotiated International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism and is pleased to report that Thailand became a signatory of the Convention on 14 September 2005. Thailand is now strengthening its domestic legislation and measures aimed at securing and physically protecting nuclear materials against theft, sabotage or access by unauthorized persons. We also welcome the decision of the diplomatic conference held in Vienna in July this year to amend the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material. The Government is reviewing those specific amendments with a view to acceding to the Convention at the earliest possible date.

With respect to the additional protocol, Thailand considers it to be a confidence-building measure and an effective international verification system for providing assurances of peaceful uses and legal transactions related to nuclear equipment and dual use. We see the merit of making the additional protocol a new verification standard. In that connection, Thailand is pleased to report that we concluded and signed an Additional Protocol with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on 22 September this year. Thailand will spare no effort to fully implement the Additional Protocol once the constitutional requirements for its entry into force have been met.

My delegation has been following closely the situation on the Korean peninsula, as it has implications for the stability of the entire Asian region and beyond. In that regard, my delegation welcomes the Joint Statement of the Fourth Round of the Six-Party Talks, issued in Beijing on 19 September, and wishes to congratulate all parties concerned on their tireless efforts. It is my delegation's hope that the parties will fully implement their obligations.

I now turn to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Having participated in the Fourth Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT last month, my delegation fully welcomes the Conference's Final Declaration and measures to promote the Treaty's entry into force. For its part, the Royal Thai Government is now in the final stage of amending and enacting domestic laws and regulations in order to ratify the Treaty. The ratification process is expected to be completed in 2006.

As one of the countries hard hit by the tsunami last December, my delegation also welcomes the ongoing application of the CTBT verification system, in particular the International Monitoring System, for its scientific and civil benefits and because it applies to tsunami warning systems. My delegation pledges its full support to enable the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization to develop and turn that initiative into concrete action.

With regard to conventional weapons, my delegation views the problems posed by the misuse of such weapons as one of the serious threats to peace, security and development. Such problems incur a grave human cost and greatly affect human security. In addressing the illicit trade and traffic in and proliferation of small arms and light weapons, my delegation attaches great importance to the full implementation, at the national, regional and international levels, of the 2001 United Nations Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons. My delegation looks forward to the formal adoption and full implementation of the draft international instrument concluded by the Open-ended

Working Group in June this year, aimed at enabling States to identify and trace, in a timely and reliable manner, illicit small arms and light weapons. It is my delegation's hope that the discussion that will take place during the forthcoming Programme of Action review conference in July next year will bring about concrete outcomes, including ways and means to address the problem of ammunition, and will chart a future direction for the international community with a view to addressing more effectively the problem of illicit small arms and light weapons.

My delegation was also heartened to see the reference to the Ottawa Convention in the summit outcome document, and supports the implementation of the elements contained therein. Thailand also welcomes the Nairobi Declaration and Action Plan, as well as the recent ratification by Vanuatu as the one hundred and forty-seventh State party.

To arrive at the full and effective implementation of instruments and agreements on small arms and light weapons and on landmines, my delegation hopes that States that are in a position to do so, as well as the private sector and the non-governmental organization community, will spare no effort in rendering assistance to States in need.

Last but not least is the issue of improving the effectiveness of the methods of work of the First Committee. My delegation is pleased to see that progress has been made on that issue and welcomes the adoption by consensus of resolution 59/95 in that connection. The resolution sets out a number of practical measures to strengthen the effectiveness of our work. My delegation hopes that the resolution will be implemented in its entirety, together with the three other significant General Assembly resolutions on revitalization — resolutions 58/126, 58/316 and the recently adopted 59/313.

My delegation also welcomes the improvement in participation in the Register of Conventional Arms and in the Standardized Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditures, as well as in the national reports on small arms and light weapons. We would also like to suggest that a simple reporting format be established for all resolutions requiring information from Member States so as to enable them to more effectively and systematically provide information to the Secretariat. The Standardized Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditures serves as a good example in that regard.

Finally, my delegation pledges its full support and cooperation to you, Mr. Chairman, throughout the course of our deliberations.

Mr. Mine (Japan): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Ambassador Chot, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the Committee. I am confident of your ability to guide us through this session, and assure you of my delegation's full support as you carry out that important task.

The Committee is convening this year in difficult times, as we celebrate the sixtieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. The international community is facing serious challenges in the field of security, disarmament and non-proliferation. These include the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the danger — in the context of the increasing threat of international terrorism — that such weapons will fall into the hands of terrorists, the proliferation of nuclear-related technology through underground networks and problems of compliance on the part of individual countries.

In this regard, it is extremely regrettable that the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was unable to produce a consensus document on substantive issues, and that the General Assembly summit outcome document reached no consensus on disarmament and non-proliferation. That will detract from our future efforts to make progress in the disarmament and non-proliferation field. The United Nations is now at a crossroads, and whether or not it is able to respond effectively to disarmament and non-proliferation challenges will depend upon the efforts of every Member State. We need to work together in the Committee to tackle such issues with a sense of urgency.

This Committee, which is tasked with deliberating on issues related to international security and disarmament, is expected to decide upon concrete measures and ways to adequately respond to such problems by drawing on the wisdom and mustering the political will of all Member States.

The task of the First Committee is also to encourage further progress in the area of international security and disarmament. To date, positive elements in the field of conventional weapons include the adoption of the Nairobi Action Plan at the first Review Conference of the Ottawa Convention, the conclusion

of negotiations on an international instrument on the marking and tracing of small arms and light weapons and the success of the second United Nations Biennial Meeting of States on the United Nations Programme of Action. Japan, together with Colombia and South Africa, will submit a draft resolution on small arms and light weapons that reflects those outcomes, and we look forward to its adoption by consensus.

International efforts to prevent terrorism include the adoption of an amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and the opening for signature last month of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism. Japan joins the representative of Thailand in calling upon all Member States to make every effort to ensure the early ratification of all related conventions.

Furthermore, it is of great significance that, at the fourth Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), held last month, 117 of the countries that have signed or ratified the Treaty agreed on a final declaration calling for the Treaty's early ratification, as well as highlighting the importance of maintaining a moratorium on nuclear testing. Japan would like to reiterate its call for all those countries that have not yet ratified the CTBT to do so as soon as possible so as to ensure the early entry into force of the Treaty.

A realistic and effective means of tackling the problems facing the international community today is the strengthening and universalization of existing regimes, as well as their full implementation. In order not to undermine the credibility of such regimes, consistency in medium- to long-term policies is of particular importance. In this regard, countries should heed the will of the international community and the voice of the public, rather than just pursue their own national interests. From that perspective, dialogue with civil society and collaboration with non-governmental organizations that have expertise in that field is invaluable, as is the promotion of disarmament and non-proliferation education.

Japan considers international frameworks, such as the NPT, the CTBT, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards agreements and Additional Protocols, the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention, to be of the utmost importance as a basis for international disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. Concerning the NPT, the lack of an agreed substantive document at the most recent Review Conference must not erode the authority and credibility of the Treaty. Each and every State party should therefore steadily implement concrete disarmament and non-proliferation measures.

Japan's fundamental position on nuclear disarmament attaches great importance to the realization, through the steady implementation of concrete measures, of a peaceful and safe world free from nuclear weapons. This practical and incremental approach towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons has been reflected in our resolutions on nuclear disarmament, submitted annually to the General Assembly since 1994.

Japan will submit a draft resolution on nuclear disarmament again this year. Given that this year marks the sixtieth anniversary of the atomic bombings, as well as of the establishment of the United Nations, we have decided to review and restructure our previous draft resolutions, avoiding repetition, so as to create one concise and strong draft resolution. The title of the draft resolution now reads, "Renewed determination towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons".

Japan hopes that all countries, including the nuclear-weapon States, regardless of any differences in position, will unite and support our nuclear disarmament draft resolution.

Every year, various nuclear disarmament resolutions are submitted to the General Assembly. While those resolutions may differ in their approach to nuclear disarmament, they all share the common goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Strong momentum would be created if all Member States were to solidify their efforts to promote the common goal of nuclear disarmament.

We welcome the active exchange of views that has taken place in recent years on the reform of the First Committee. Strengthening the functioning of the First Committee is an urgent task. Such a discussion should take into account the work of other disarmament machinery such as the Conference on Disarmament and the Disarmament Commission, which are currently stagnating, and that discussion should be seen in the broader context of renewing the United Nations as a whole.

We welcome last year's consensus adoption of a resolution on improving the effectiveness of the

methods of work of the First Committee (resolution 59/95), and we welcome the efforts of the Chair and Member States towards its implementation. We look forward to a useful exchange of views again this year on the subject, and Japan, for its part, will actively participate in the discussion.

Mr. Yam (Singapore): Please allow me to join other speakers in congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee and in extending appreciation to the former Chairman, Mr. Luis Alfonso de Alba, for his good work during the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

My delegation would like to express our outrage at the bombings in Bali on the night of 1 October 2005 and to extend our deepest condolences to the families of the victims. Singapore condemns that cruel and senseless act. We express our sympathy and solidarity with the Government and the people of Indonesia and with the countries whose nationals were also victims of that barbaric crime.

The statements that we have heard over the past few days reflect the shared concern at the lack of progress in the areas of international disarmament and non-proliferation. Terms such as "lethargy", "paralysis" and "overcast atmosphere" have been used to describe the current situation. The Conference on Disarmament did not achieve consensus on the way ahead. The 2005 Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty failed to produce any substantive result. And the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty remains far beyond the grasp of the international community almost 10 years after its adoption. Significantly, perhaps what is most indicative of how little we have managed to agree on is the omission of any mention of disarmament or non-proliferation in the 2005 world summit outcome document (resolution 60/1).

My delegation is disappointed at the lack of results on those deeply critical issues. As Ambassador Luis Alfonso de Alba eloquently said earlier this week, a valuable opportunity has been lost. That lost opportunity is especially regretful in the context of the urgent security threats that we face today. It is starkly clear that our collective effort of international diplomacy to address disarmament and non-proliferation is in danger of being outpaced, first, by the unrelenting march of science and technology in the creation of more sophisticated and destructive weaponry; and secondly, by the extremism of terrorists, who have no qualms about devising new, more lethal means of inflicting devastation on innocent civilians. Since the start of the new millennium, the human tragedies that have occurred in New York, Bali, Riyadh and London testify to the indiscriminate, global reach of terrorism. If terrorists lay their hands on nuclear, chemical or biological weapons, the consequences will be devastating.

In the light of those new and evolving threats, there is great urgency for the international community to act in concert in the field of international peace and security. No country can hope to be spared those threats, nor can they hope to counter those threats alone, without cooperating with the larger community.

While we cannot expect to change the somewhat strained international climate overnight, Singapore believes that there are actions we can take now to preserve and build international confidence in order to advance the cause of international disarmament and non-proliferation.

First, we need to reaffirm our collective commitment to preserving the sanctity of international agreements. The credibility of international organizations and agreements is a paramount ingredient in creating trust among Member States. In that regard, Singapore urges Iran to heed the call of the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to return to the process of dialogue to resolve outstanding matters, within the framework of the resolution adopted by the Board on 24 September 2005.

Secondly, we must collectively recognize the need to pursue progress concurrently on the two fronts of disarmament and non-proliferation. Our approach must evolve from a vision of the two issues as competing priorities to one that recognizes them as mutually reinforcing thrusts. To echo the words of Ambassador Sergio Duarte at the 2005 Review Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, there is no possibility of success if each group clings to its own narrow perceptions. In that regard, Singapore appeals to all parties to adopt a flexible position for resolving their differences so that real progress can be made.

Singapore is highly sensitive to the dangers of proliferation, perhaps more so than other countries because of our size, openness and vulnerability. Nevertheless, the discovery in February 2004 of a

sophisticated and clandestine nuclear procurement network is surely reason enough for us all to enhance international cooperation to counter proliferation. For its part, Singapore has consistently supported multilateral non-proliferation regimes such as the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention. We believe that they are important instruments in the international effort to fight the spread of weapons of mass destruction.

Singapore also supports the full and effective implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), which, inter alia, calls on Member States to enhance domestic controls and step up cooperation against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. While legally binding multilateralism should be the basis of the global non-proliferation regime, other multi-country initiatives such as the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), are important elements that fill the gaps in our efforts. I am pleased to note the successful completion of a recent PSI maritime interdiction exercise, hosted by Singapore in August, with the participation of 13 other countries. I am also pleased to note that in September, Singapore joined more than 100 countries in becoming a signatory to an Additional Protocol to the IAEA Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement.

The United Nations has a vital role to play in leading a multipronged approach to resolving the series of security issues that now faces the international community: terrorism, disarmament and non-proliferation and the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons. As the only organization with a global mandate, the United Nations is best equipped to revive international dialogue, rebuild international trust and take effective steps to further peace and security in the world.

As a United Nations Member State committed to the pursuit of international disarmament and non-proliferation, Singapore commends the noble effort that Norway and six other countries have undertaken to help us find a way forward.

Finally, my delegation wishes to express our hope and confidence that the Committee will be able to work forward in a purposeful manner, under your able leadership, Mr. Chairman. We assure you of our fullest cooperation and support.

Mr. Neil (Jamaica): My delegation wishes to extend our congratulations to you, Mr. Chairman, and the other members of the Bureau on the assumption of your posts. We also want to pay tribute to the Chairman at the fifty-ninth session, Ambassador De Alba of Mexico, whose sterling work assisted us in improving the efficiency of the Committee. We should continue to build on his efforts.

Jamaica associates itself with the statements made by the Permanent Representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and by the Permanent Representative of Trinidad and Tobago on behalf of the Caribbean Community. We support their statements, and we only wish to add a few additional remarks.

The past year was particularly challenging for achieving the objectives of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation. It had been hoped that the opportunity provided by the sixtieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations would generate the momentum necessary for the realization of previously agreed commitments. That, unfortunately, has not been the case.

At the same time, there is increased anxiety about the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the possibility that those weapons could end up in the hands of terrorists and other persons. There is a general feeling of unease and the world now seems even more insecure.

Jamaica, like other delegations, was disappointed that the outcome document did not provide guidelines relevant to advancing the goals of disarmament and non-proliferation. We were able to find agreement on other matters, such as terrorism, human rights and even management reform of the Secretariat; yet, on matters of immense consequence to the very survival and existence of all mankind, there was silence. That, it should be pointed out, was in spite of the fact that disarmament and the regulation of armaments constitute an important obligation under the Charter.

The current state of events, while disappointing, should not really be a surprise, as inaction on disarmament issues seems to be the order of the day, as we have seen from the failure of the seventh Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) earlier this year, the very dismal track-record of the Conference on Disarmament, and the continuing

inability of the Disarmament Commission to function by even agreeing on its agenda. It seems that we need to take some action to make some forward progress.

At the same time, we would want to commend the Government of Mexico for the successful convening of the First Conference of States Parties and Signatories of Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones, which was held from 26 to 28 April. It is hoped that we can build on the successful outcome of that Conference in order to move closer to our goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

Despite all the challenges, Jamaica remains committed to the goal of general and complete disarmament, and believes that the great military Powers should take the lead. We deem it critical that there be fulfilment by the nuclear-weapon States of their obligations under multilateral disarmament instruments, in particular article VI of the NPT. There should be adherence to previously agreed commitments on disarmament and non-proliferation, including those of the sixth Review Conference of the NPT and of the 13 practical steps that were agreed on. Unless commitments are fully respected and honoured, there will be no progress towards reaching non-proliferation goals. It should be clear to us that the strengthening of confidence in international security will be dependent on the absence of discriminatory or selective application of the norms and regulations governing arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation.

Jamaica agrees that it is now time for fresh approaches to be found so as to effect real change in the disarmament agenda. We can broadly support the thinking of the President of the General Assembly on an approach based on creativity and new ideas. Such moves for change, however, should not be at the expense of previously agreed instruments and need to be based on a firm commitment to multilateralism, underpinned by strong political will.

This year's session of the First Committee should provide the opportunity for a discussion on how to reactivate disarmament. We are therefore inclined to support the proposal put forward by the representative of Pakistan yesterday for you, Sir, to conduct a number of informal consultations on ways to move forward on the international disarmament agenda.

We are, however, convinced that the convening of the fourth special session on disarmament would be the best means by which to have a thorough review and discussion on all matters relevant to disarmament and non-proliferation. Such a session is long overdue and would allow for a review of the disarmament machinery and focus on the current challenges to international security. It is preferable that discussion on such matters be held in a universal intergovernmental forum so that we can have a comprehensive approach to all matters relating to disarmament and non-proliferation, and include the participation of all States.

We note there has been some modest progress in the implementation of the United Nations 2001 Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. That was reflected in reports submitted by States during the Second Biennial Meeting held in July.

But much more needs to be done. The proliferation of small arms and light weapons continues to escalate and to undermine the stability and the social and economic fabric of many developing countries. We were therefore profoundly disappointed that the efforts of the Open-ended Working Group established to elaborate an international instrument on the marking and tracing of illicit weapons did not produce an instrument which would be legally binding. We have no assurance that it is to be politically binding. In the light of experience at the failure of political will to honour disarmament instruments, we have little confidence that implementation will be effectively pursued by the producer countries. We therefore have to register our strong reservations on the recommendation that the Working Group has placed before us.

The international community needs to make a firmer commitment to dealing effectively with the proliferation of that category of weapons, which seriously affects our national security.

In conclusion, Jamaica welcomes the implementation of the Nairobi Action Plan on landmines adopted last year. As a State party to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, Jamaica is committed to the full implementation of the treaty. We commend the steps taken in order to curb the use of anti-personnel landmines and congratulate those countries which are seeking to actively comply with its provisions.

Mr. Hemayetuddin (Bangladesh): Allow me at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, and the Bureau on your well-deserved election. Your wisdom and dynamic leadership, I am confident, will lead the work of the Committee to fruition.

My delegation also expresses its gratitude to Ambassador Luis Alfonso de Alba of Mexico for his skilful conduct of the Committee's work at the fifty-ninth session. Appreciation is also owed to Mr. Nobuyasu Abe, the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, for his thoughtful statement.

My delegation associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

As members might agree, the work of the First Committee at this session has assumed unprecedented significance for many reasons. 2005 has been a year of successive failures and disappointment as far as our disarmament and non-proliferation agenda is concerned. We need stronger political will and more innovative thinking to arrest that dangerous slide.

It was a huge disappointment for Bangladesh that the 2005 Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) failed to draw a chart for our future course of action in advancing our common agenda of disarmament and non-proliferation. We witnessed with much anguish how most of the time allocated to the Conference was taken up in procedural wrangling. That unfortunate event has now raised the inevitable question: Does failure of the 2005 NPT Review Conference mean the weakening of our achievements in 1995 and 2000? We do not think so. We simply cannot turn away from our agreements of 1995 and 2000, adopted by consensus. That would be a substantial step backward and a legally untenable position.

In 2005, the Disarmament Commission once again failed to agree on an agenda for its substantive session. That was also the case with the Conference on Disarmament, the only multilateral forum for negotiations on disarmament, which could not agree on a programme of work, thus blocking its substantive work.

As if that were not enough, the High-level Plenary Meeting of 14 to 16 September 2005 also failed on this very vital front in the maintenance of international peace and security. It is deeply regrettable that, after months of intense negotiations, we could not agree on a common disarmament and non-proliferation agenda or even simply reaffirm our past commitments.

Notwithstanding our failures, it is important that we look forward rather than just wonder how we reached this point. We believe that a lack of political will has brought us to this situation of possibly dangerous deadlock.

This regrettable trend in our negotiations on disarmament and non-proliferation underlines the urgent need for us to engage in meaningful multilateralism if we are to make real progress. We agree with the Secretary-General that the instruments of multilateralism must be revitalized if they are to continue contributing to international peace and security. Bangladesh has always been a strong advocate of asserting the supremacy of the rule of law and multilateralism in all areas of international relations, especially in the areas of disarmament and non-proliferation. We believe that the clearly harmful trend of unilateralism and the wilful interpretation of multilateral instruments and international law by some must be reversed.

Existing and emerging threats have heightened international concern about weapons of mass destruction. The absence of firm commitment to disarmament, non-compliance with nuclear non-proliferation commitments, the existence of a clandestine nuclear network and the danger of weapons of mass destruction falling into the hands of terrorists are all ominous signs of impending dangers. We must resume the stalled multilateral negotiations on disarmament and non-proliferation without further delay if we are really serious about effectively addressing those threats.

Like many other countries, Bangladesh considers the Conference on Disarmament to be the sole multilateral forum for negotiations on disarmament. We are disappointed that the substantive work of that important body has been stalled for years. We call upon all to resume substantive work in the Conference on Disarmament, in line with the unanimous conclusion of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice that States have an obligation to pursue in good faith, and to bring to a conclusion, negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control.

Bangladesh reiterates its call for the convening of an international conference to reach agreement on a phased programme for the elimination of all nuclear weapons, for the prohibition of their development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, and use or threat of use, and for their destruction. We also urge the conclusion of a nuclear weapons convention. Bangladesh continues to believe that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or the threat of use of nuclear weapons. The major players in that field need to demonstrate their political will to move forward and emerge from the miserable situation in which we now find ourselves.

It is obvious that the nuclear-weapon States have failed to demonstrate any visible progress towards accomplishing the elimination of their nuclear arsenals, leading to nuclear disarmament. We wish to recall that the greatest threat to humanity comes from the continued existence of nuclear weapons and their possible use or the threat of their use. We must underscore the need to accomplish the total elimination of nuclear weapons to save the world from that menace forever. Bangladesh demands reaffirmation of the negative security assurances provided by the nuclear-weapon States.

We are concerned at the fact that the nuclear-weapon States are giving existing stockpiles of nuclear weapons greater precision capability and are developing new types of weaponry. Both developments have serious and adverse destabilizing consequences. We wish to recall that giving more precision capability to the existing stockpiles and developing new types of nuclear weapons are in contravention of the assurances provided by the nuclear-weapon States at the time of the conclusion of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). The CTBT would have prevented the improvement of existing nuclear weapons and the development of new types of nuclear weapons.

We believe that the proliferation of nuclear weapons and their acquisition by State and non-State actors are real possibilities. Giving nuclear weapons precision capability only makes those weapons more attractive to terrorists for acquisition and use, bringing havoc to us all. We cannot allow that to happen. Bangladesh reaffirms its firm conviction that the best guarantee against nuclear weapons proliferation continues to be their total elimination.

Bangladesh's record on disarmament and non-proliferation is, as all will agree, impeccable. We have consciously and unconditionally opted to remain non-nuclear. Bangladesh is the first Annex 2 State in South Asia to sign and ratify the CTBT. We are party to almost all disarmament-related treaties, including the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the CTBT, the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, the Anti-personnel Mines Treaty and the Biological Weapons Convention. We have also concluded a safeguards agreement with the IAEA and have signed and ratified the Additional Protocols. This provides tangible testimony to our unswerving commitment to the goal of nuclear weapon non-proliferation, disarmament and their eventual elimination.

Article IV of the NPT guarantees the inalienable rights of all States parties to the NPT to the development, research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, without discrimination. Also, article IV recognizes the right of all States parties to cooperate among themselves in the exchange of equipment, materials and scientific and technological knowledge and information for the peaceful use of nuclear technology.

However, we are concerned that undue restrictions on the export to developing non-nuclear-weapon countries of material, equipment and technology for peaceful purposes continue to persist through measures incompatible with the Treaty's provisions. Those barriers must be removed. We are also disappointed that extraneous reasons are being used by some nuclear-weapon States to deny the right of non-nuclear States to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and technology. Bangladesh calls upon all concerned to engage in constructive dialogue in order to implement the provisions of articles I, II and IV of the NPT in an environment of trust and confidence.

We wish to reaffirm the inviolability of peaceful nuclear activities. We consider that any attack or threat of attack against peaceful nuclear facilities poses a great danger to all. The threat of attack buttresses the perceived need to defend. It will demonstrate the efficacy of weaponization. That is incontrovertible logic. We can deny that only at our great peril.

We are concerned at the continued development and deployment of anti-ballistic missile defence systems and the pursuit of advanced military

technologies capable of being deployed in outer space. That has further eroded the international climate. Bangladesh reiterates its call for the resumption of work on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, in the framework of the Conference on Disarmament.

Bangladesh greatly values regional approaches to nuclear disarmament. Building confidence through the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones can contribute significantly to disarmament. We welcome all existing nuclear weapon free zones and call for the establishment of similar zones in South Asia, the Middle East and other parts of the world. The Kathmandu process needs to be followed to contribute to regional peace and security in Asia and the Pacific. In South Asia, India and Pakistan must relinquish their nuclear option and join the NPT. In the Middle East, Israel must do the same.

Armed conflicts and a deterioration of law and order have devastating effects on our societies and economies. In Bangladesh, an otherwise peaceful society, the unbridled flow of small arms and light weapons through our porous borders and their illicit trade have significantly frustrated Government efforts to improve the law and order situation. We therefore value the initiatives aimed at curbing the flow and illicit trade of small arms and light weapons. We believe that the issue of small arms and light weapons — the real weapons of mass destruction, which cause a higher death toll than that caused by the atomic bombs in Japan — must be placed in the overall perspective of peace and security. If we are to stop the self-perpetuating cycle of violence, we must focus on prevention, including by addressing the root causes of violence.

Although our preference has always been a legally binding document, we are encouraged by the recent agreement on the text of a politically binding international instrument to enable States to identify and trace, in a timely and reliable manner, illicit small arms and light weapons. We look forward to its adoption at the current session of the General Assembly.

We wish to inform the United Nations membership, with a modicum of pride, that Bangladesh has destroyed all its stockpiles of landmines, in fulfilment of its commitment to the international instruments on landmines. We are concerned that a huge number of civilians, particularly women and children, still fall victim to anti-personnel landmines in conflict and post-conflict situations around the world. We call upon those States which have not yet done so to become parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. We also urge that assistance be provided for landmine clearance operations and to rehabilitate the victims.

We are dismayed to learn that in 2004, estimated global military expenditures exceeded $1 trillion and that a continued increase was projected. This is an extremely alarming situation. We believe that most of these expenditures are the result of an unfortunate arms race that increasingly has a negative impact on our development agenda. There is no doubt that there exists a direct relationship between disarmament and development. We urge all countries, particularly the major military Powers, to curb their military expenditures and to devote part of the resources made available thereby to economic and social development in the developing countries. Such a move would greatly advance the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, by 2015.

It is imperative now that we act decisively and move in the right direction. Weapons of mass destruction, be they nuclear, chemical or biological, have brought no benefit to humanity. They have only caused the world immeasurable suffering and fear and have prevented development. Resources have been deployed to devise mechanisms to kill one another rather than to grow and prosper together in a peaceful world. Now is the time for us to work for a safer world, a world free of weapons of mass destruction, a world free of nuclear weapons. Such is the world we hope to create for ourselves and to bequeath to the generations yet to come.

Mr. Bouchaara (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): Sir, let me congratulate you on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee and assure you of the full support of the delegation of Morocco as you carry out your task. Let me also, on behalf of the Kingdom of Morocco, express our sincere gratitude and congratulations to Ambassador De Alba of Mexico for the excellent work he carried out during the preceding session. I also wish to take this opportunity to convey sincere condolences to the delegation of Indonesia following the terrorist attacks that took place several days ago in Bali. And finally, my delegation associates itself with the statements made by Indonesia

on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and by Nigeria on behalf of the African Group.

Last year, at the fifty-ninth session, the delegation of Morocco expressed the hope during the First Committee's general debate that the international community would be able to benefit from the important events slated for 2005 to provide new momentum towards disarmament and non-proliferation. Unfortunately, a historic opportunity to reinvigorate the multilateral disarmament system has been lost. The lack of any reference to disarmament in the outcome document of the High-level Plenary Meeting (resolution 60/1) is symptomatic of the inability of the international community to reach a common perception of the major challenges to be met in the area of non-proliferation and disarmament, and with respect to collective solutions that we need to identify. This lack of a shared vision that would marshal strong international support for actions to be undertaken should be, for all Member States, an additional reason to make the collective effort that the international community is entitled to expect from us.

Despite successive setbacks this year, the Kingdom of Morocco continues to believe that it is in the interest of everyone to work to promote revitalization of the multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation system. This would entail strengthening the international existing instruments, specifically the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), whose relevance needs to be reiterated and supported. This would also require giving all necessary attention to new challenges, specifically to the risks of terrorist groups using weapons of mass destruction (WMD). And this also, lastly, calls for special effort to work to resolve regional disputes. In the Middle East we would again remind the Committee of the importance of establishing a WMD-free zone and the need for Israel, the only State in the region which has not yet done so, to accede to the NPT.

In addition, peace and security in the Mediterranean region necessarily would entail reducing inequalities between the North and South shores to promote the emergence of shared prosperity and sustainable development. This, finally, would involve constructing a Maghreb united and in solidarity, a goal to which my country is deeply committed.

The considerable ravages caused by the trafficking in small arms and light weapons, specifically on the African continent, fully justify the importance accorded to this issue by the United Nations. We commend the adoption last June by the working group that was established on this subject by the General Assembly, of a draft international instrument on the marking and tracing of small arms and light weapons.

Indeed, Morocco supported a legally binding instrument; nevertheless, we believe that the draft instrument adopted, although only of a political nature, constitutes a useful step in the right direction. We welcome in advance the support that the General Assembly will give to the draft instrument by adopting it. That would be clear testimony of solidarity for all countries suffering from the consequences of trafficking in small arms and light weapons, specifically in Africa.

Throughout this past year the Kingdom of Morocco has spared no effort to meet all of its international commitments in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation. As such, the Government Council of the Kingdom of Morocco adopted on 14 July 2005 the United Nations Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, thereby opening the door to the ratification of that document. Similarly, we have submitted our national report under the provisions of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and have also made our national statement as a State that has subscribed to the Hague Code of Conduct Against Ballistic Missiles.

The First Committee has shown the way by adopting measures last year to enhance its working methods. What we need to do now is to demonstrate our political will to move forward in terms of implementation of the commitments taken in the past. Otherwise, the repetitive nature of our resolutions will only intensify and our own credibility will be damaged. The raison d'être of the First Committee is not only to permit exchanges of views among members, but also, and above all, to achieve political goals to enable us to contribute to multilateral disarmament and to strengthening international security.

Mr. Lara-Peña (Dominican Republic) (spoke in Spanish): This being our first statement in this session's general debate in the First Committee, we express our satisfaction, Sir, at your election to the

Democratic Security, which is aimed at curbing crime in local neighbourhoods through sensitizing police work to the needs of our citizens, thereby promoting citizens' integration into fighting the plague which crime represents.

Apart from crime, however, there are new threats States must nowadays come to grips with, threats more subtle than those of the naked cruelty and senselessness of terrorism. Those threats bring in their wake hunger and grinding poverty and the remedies required cannot be individually administered.

In this respect, we want to draw attention to a point that, while not new, takes on extremely dangerous dimensions in this world of ours here at the beginning of the twenty-first century. We are referring to the crisis in energy resources. As the President of the Dominican Republic put it at the recent High-level Plenary Meeting here at the United Nations, "to guarantee political stability, good governance and international peace and security ... we call upon the world community to place the current energy crisis as a top priority on the international agenda" (*A/60/PV.7, p. 16*). In that vein, I would venture to reaffirm in this room the idea our President put forward at the summit: that of convening a major gathering of world leaders to present alternative solutions to this serious problem, which may well be described as the ultimate blow to the prosperity of developing nations. The enormous pressure of fuel price volatility on our emerging economies is becoming a brake and a factor of distortion for any development plan.

There are still other variables related to energy sources. However, our concern about coming up with a feasible and lasting solution to the energy crisis initiated by the energy needs of our countries must not make us lose sight of the dangers that attend our resorting to certain energy sources and the need to circumvent potential dangers. In this sense, the use of nuclear energy is a controversial issue at international forums and in terms of the relations among States. Various conventions regulate its use and one of them concerns the effects on individuals and surrounding regions of transport of radioactive wastes through particularly sensitive areas.

The economy of the Dominican Republic depends in large measure on the tourist industry. For the progress of that sector vital to our development, we need clean water and a pristine environment, which is

why any radioactive damage done to our coasts could spell a major setback — all this in the midst of a critical situation our country is already going through — a situation we share with the countries in our region. We trust that the international community will show due vigilance and guarantee the implementation of safety and security measures regarding the transport of radioactive material and hazardous wastes as established by the International Atomic Energy Agency and the International Maritime Organization, along with the adoption of norms to complement those measures.

My delegation is especially interested in aspects relating to guarantees dealing with pollution of the maritime environment, the exchange of information on sea routes and the communication of contingency plans in the event of shipwreck, as well as a commitment to recover materials in the event of dumping, the decontamination of areas thus affected, and the establishment of machinery and effective norms to assign liability in the event of damage. As has been our country's traditional position, we will continue contributing to the success of the work of this Committee, certain that in this way we will, to a certain extent, be laying the groundwork for a lasting peace.

Mr. Ikouebe (Congo) *(spoke in French)*: On behalf of my delegation, let me sincerely congratulate you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau on your election and express our gratitude to your predecessor for his excellent work during the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly. My delegation, finally, would like to associate itself with the statements made here by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and by the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the African Group.

The work of the First Committee is taking place at a time when many issues are before us with respect to strengthening disarmament instruments and with respect to nuclear non-proliferation and ending the arms race. This is in an international context where the goals of disarmament in general are far from being achieved, while the challenges to be met are increasing in number, particularly with respect to the rise of international terrorism.

We thus meet in a climate of increased concern, while we seem daily to be moving farther and farther from the commitments made at the Millennium Summit. We saw this recently at the High-level Plenary Meeting, during which States failed to reach agreement on how to advance the debate on disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

How did we reach this point? My delegation feels that this concern must be at the very heart of our current discussions if we really want to end the existing stalemate.

While the lack of consensus on disarmament was manifest at the recent summit, this lack of consensus is in no way surprising. It is in keeping with a series of earlier setbacks. other meetings on disarmament issues had previously demonstrated a dangerous trend towards the lack of consensus that denied to the summit a solemn commitment on this vital issue.

In its annual report to the General Assembly (A/60/27), the Conference on Disarmament, the international community's sole multilateral body for disarmament negotiations, reports that it concluded its 2005 session again without agreeing on a programme of work. It has neither established nor re-established mechanisms for any specific agenda items.

For the past nine years, the Conference on Disarmament has been unable to reach agreement on a programme of work or undertake any substantive work. As we all know, the seventh Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), held at New York from 2 to 27 May, ended without a substantive agreement, adopting a document concerning only procedural questions. The failure of the seventh NPT Review Conference could erode the credibility of the non-proliferation regime in a world where the nuclear danger still seems to be considerable.

The regrets and frustration voiced by various parties over the setback was not enough to make us commit to a process of fruitful negotiation during discussions on the contents of the outcome document at the summit. Instead, our national interests took precedent over the need for a collective spirit towards a world free of weapons of mass destruction.

It is clear from the outcome of the summit that no agreement was reached on nuclear disarmament, security safeguards, safeguard mechanisms and on the issue of the Middle East. Nor was there an agreement on implementation of the provisions of the Treaty concerning the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

The impact of our failures is that we do not send a clear and strong message to terrorists. If we want to send such a message, we must begin by demonstrating to them our unwavering determination. Here, we can only reiterate the appeal made to States in annex 2 of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) to ratify the Treaty.

We welcome the statement made by the People's Republic of China, one of the States listed in annex 2, that it will ratify the CTBT. We are certain that the Treaty is an effective disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation measure and that its prompt entry into force will make a considerable contribution to international peace and security. Likewise, we support the concept of collective security based on mutual trust, cooperation, shared benefits, equality and the peaceful settlement of disputes.

The second Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in New York from 11 to 15 July, provided an opportunity for Member States, international organizations and non-governmental organizations to review progress made at the national, regional and international levels since the adoption of the 2001 Programme of Action.

Unfortunately, it was impossible to conclude the talks that were begun in June 2004 with the adoption of a legally binding instrument enabling States to identify small arms and light weapons and monitor illegal trafficking. It is regrettable that the proposed draft instrument is political in nature and that it makes no reference to ammunition.

As the Secretary-General said in his report on the work of the Organization (A/60/1), this agreement is a new and encouraging step toward implementing the political commitments made within the framework of the programme of action. However, he called for more resolve in implementation and in the ongoing concerted efforts with respect to the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

We are still far from having achieved our goals. Yet, it is the responsibility of all of us to history and future generations to promote and strengthen the various multilateral disarmament instruments in order to reduce the threat that conventional weapons and weapons of mass destruction pose to humankind.

I wish to take this opportunity to raise the concerns of the Congo and other States members of the Economic Community of Central African States with respect to the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons that were expressed at the twenty-second Ministerial Meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, held at Brazzaville from 14 to 18 March 2005.

The review of implementation of the Programme of Action made at the Meeting shows that efforts made by States in the region continue to be weak and could be undermined by difficulties related to porous borders, lack of equipment and lack of precise data and information on the nature and quantity of arms in circulation.

I wish to renew the appeal made at the Meeting that the international community provide the necessary support for effectively combating the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons. These observations and this appeal apply also to the entire Great Lakes region, which needs to be seen as a specific area for development and reconstruction, requiring specially allocated funds. The international community will thus have greatly contributed to conditions conducive to consolidating peace, security and stability in an area that has suffered far too long from armed conflict.

Mr. Gharbi (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): The Permanent Representative of Tunisia had a last-minute obligation and has asked me to speak on his behalf.

On behalf of my delegation, I most warmly congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the First Committee. I assure you of the support and cooperation of my delegation as you carry out your task to assure a successful outcome of our work.

Tunisia has always believed that the arms race can be pursued only to the detriment of the most basic needs of civilian populations. Tunisia believes that priority must be given to reorienting the bulk of the resources dedicated to military ends to development activities and economic growth.

At the September summit, the international community again missed an opportunity to establish precise goals with a view to relaunching the process of disarmament and non-proliferation, which has clearly slowed during the past few years. In addition to the failure of the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear

Weapons (NPT) in May of this year, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty has still not entered into force nine years after its adoption. Similarly, the Conference on Disarmament — the only multilateral disarmament negotiating body — continues to face problems with regard to its programme of work. Furthermore, the Disarmament Commission is still having trouble establishing a definitive and firm agenda for its future work. Problems thus persist, impeding the process. My delegation continues to believe that the multilateral solutions on which agreements have been reached in accordance with the Charter provide the best way of resolving, in a lasting manner, the many issues relating to disarmament and international security.

Any assessment of the situation with regard to nuclear disarmament over the past 30 years would conclude that there has been a lack of meaningful progress. We are still a long way from achieving the goals set out in article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) with regard to nuclear disarmament and general and complete disarmament under effective international control. In this context, we reiterate the appeals that have been made for the full implementation of the commitments entered into by the nuclear-weapon States during the 2000 NPT Review Conference so as to bring about the total elimination of their nuclear stockpiles.

Pending the elimination of all nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, non-nuclear-weapon States are entitled to effective security guarantees against the threat or use of such weapons. We also believe that the time has come to convene the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament with a view to identifying ways and means to re-launch the disarmament process at the multilateral level. In this context, it is our hope that the Open-ended Working Group dealing with that issue will be able to make positive proposals to that effect.

The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by the States of the region concerned, as well as the establishment of zones free from all weapons of mass destruction, is an important way of promoting non-proliferation and disarmament at both the regional and international levels. That is part and parcel of the strengthening of the NPT regime.

In this context, the Middle East continues to be one of the areas of greatest concern because of Israel's refusal to accede to the NPT and to place all of its nuclear facilities under the comprehensive safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency, despite the many appeals from other States in the region and the many General Assembly resolutions relating to the matter. In that respect, we call on the international community, in particular the Powers that have influence, to take urgent practical measures to establish such a zone.

We are aware of the enormous importance of the Convention banning anti-personnel landmines and its beneficial effects for international peace and security. My country therefore promptly ratified the Convention and has completed the process of destroying its stockpiles of anti-personnel landmines. We hope that all States parties will take part in the process with a view to implementing the provisions of the Convention.

Similarly, we welcome the work accomplished this year by the Open-ended Working Group charged with negotiating an international draft instrument on the tracing of small arms and light weapons.

Tunisia is playing an active role in the many arenas of which it forms a part, first and foremost the Arab Maghreb Union, which for us represents a fundamental historic achievement and a strategic choice. My country has been contributing since the 1960s to the restoration and consolidation of peace in the world, particularly in Africa, through its involvement in various peacekeeping operations. Tunisia is also working steadfastly to ensure the process the success of the Barcelona process, which provides an important basis for cooperation and solidarity among countries on both sides of the Mediterranean. That process contributes to strengthening the partnership in the Mediterranean with respect to the economic and security challenges confronting the region.

My country will continue to play a role in promoting peace and disarmament. We wish the Committee every success in its work.

Mr. Erçin (Turkey): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau on your election. My delegation will spare no effort in supporting your endeavours during the work of the Committee.

Turkey aligns itself with the statement made by the United Kingdom on behalf of the European Union. I will elaborate briefly on some issues to which my country attaches particular importance.

I wish to start with the global security environment, which has changed dramatically in recent years. Today, non-State actors, terrorists and States that are not in compliance with non-proliferation and disarmament requirements, as well as delays in the fulfilment of nuclear disarmament engagements and obligations, challenge the delicate balance that the system of treaties has established over the past four decades. That balance should be preserved, and the United Nations should be able to respond to those challenges.

Nevertheless, as many speakers have pointed out, the United Nations family has failed to take concrete steps in the past year on the pressing issues of non-proliferation and disarmament. We were not able to bridge the gaps between the various positions on the draft disarmament portion of the World Summit Outcome.

Those setbacks should not discourage us. On the contrary, they should increase our resolve to work together in order to give new life and energy to the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda. Turkey will support all efforts to that end. In this context, we would like to place particular emphasis on the necessity of reinvigorating the work carried out within the Conference on Disarmament. That body bears the brunt of the effects of the international community's efforts in this field, and we should strive to keep it up to speed.

Arms control, non-proliferation and disarmamen are important elements of Turkey's national security policy. Turkey is a party to all international non-proliferation instruments and export-control regimes, and wishes to see the universalization and effective implementation of those instruments.

In addition, Turkey also supports Security Council 1540 (2004) and the Proliferation Security Initiative, which, in our opinion, complement the global efforts to combat the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery.

Despite the failure of the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which took place in May, Turkey believes that the NPT is still a unique and irreplaceable multilateral instrument, the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime and the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament. One indispensable component of that regime is, without doubt, the verification authority of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). That authority should be strengthened and the Model Additional Protocol should be adopted as the universal norm for verifying compliance with the NPT. That is especially important in view of the recent crisis that we faced within the IAEA.

As it is located in a region of particular concern with regard to global nuclear non-proliferation, Turkey also attaches great importance to the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), and appeals once again, in particular to the remaining Annex II States that have not yet done so, to sign and ratify the Treaty.

In this context, I would also like to reiterate our support for the long-standing idea of creating a zone free from weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. Turkey encourages all efforts aimed at achieving a common regional understanding on this project with the participation of all parties concerned. That, inter alia, necessitates the wider adherence to and effective implementation in our region of the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention. We urge all countries in our region which are not party to those instruments to become parties promptly.

The progressive increase in the range and accuracy of ballistic missiles make the proliferation threat all the more worrying. Turkey believes that the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation constitutes a practical step towards an internationally accepted legal framework in this field.

Conventional weapons proliferation also constitutes a serious concern for my country. The excessive accumulation and uncontrolled spread of small arms and light weapons pose a significant threat to peace and security, as well as to the socio-economic development of many countries. There is also a close relationship between the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and terrorism. Turkey will continue to actively contribute to all efforts within the United Nations and other forums to foster international cooperation and the establishment of effective norms and rules with a view to combating and eradicating the

illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects.

Proliferation and unauthorized use of Man-Portable Air Defence Systems (MANPADS) is also a matter of serious concern within the area of small arms and light weapons. Turkey strongly believes that the international community should act decisively to improve stockpile security and strengthen export controls in countries that import and manufacture MANPADS. In that regard, Turkey will again sponsor a draft resolution on MANPADS this year, and hopes that the Committee will adopt it by consensus.

Another worrying issue in the field of conventional weapons is the irresponsible and indiscriminate use of anti-personnel landmines. Turkey fully supports efforts to universalize and effectively implement the Ottawa Convention and to realize the vision of a world free from anti-personnel mines.

I would also like to note that Turkey became party to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and its Additional Protocols I, II and IV in March 2005. In line with our obligations under Additional Protocol II, Turkey has submitted a report on its activities.

My intervention would not be complete without mentioning our support for the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. That tool is, in our view, a very useful mechanism and a complement to our work in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation.

In concluding my remarks, I would like to stress once again the importance Turkey attaches to general and complete disarmament and the continued support my country provides to all efforts in the field of sustaining international security through arms control and disarmament. While the task ahead of us is a difficult one, we stand ready to take an active part in all efforts towards that end.

Mr. Requeijo Gual (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Cuba endorses the statement delivered last Monday by the Permanent Representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

I should like to begin by reaffirming the relevance and importance of the First Committee, particularly today when we are being mired down in a lengthy debate over what happened at the multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation forums during the period we are discussing.

On 16 September the High-level Plenary Meeting concluded with the adoption of an outcome document (resolution 60/1) from which issues of vital importance to our peoples were omitted. Indeed, the fact that the majority of United Nations Member States were shut out of the final negotiations has been denounced. That discriminatory and in no way transparent procedure was also applied to the consideration of issues to be included in a section on disarmament and non-proliferation. The final product of that non-inclusive negotiation was disappointing and deplorable because the decision was made to eliminate the section from the final document, owing to the United States delegation's rejection of language on nuclear disarmament. That omission is particularly alarming if we bear in mind that, in our current unipolar world, military expenditures continue to grow, principally owing to a dizzying increase in the super-Power's military budget. That, in turn, makes all the more evident hegemony, unilateralism, interventionism — covert or overt — the insecurity of the weakest countries, as well as the intent to validate the doctrine of the preventive use of force. For those reasons it becomes ever more imperative to preserve multilateralism in international relations, based on a strict adherence to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

It is simply unacceptable that there are a billion illiterates and 900 million people suffering from hunger in the world while annual military expenditures are already estimated to be rising to a trillion dollars. How much more progress could be made towards attaining the oft-touted but modest Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) if but a fraction of those colossal military expenditures were to go towards resolving the problems of underdevelopment and reducing the gap between the richest and the poorest countries?

Cuba continues to firmly advocate general and complete disarmament under strict international control. In particular, we call for the total elimination of all weapons of mass destruction. Cuba, together with the other countries of the Non-Aligned Movement, has always given top priority to nuclear disarmament — aware as we are of the danger that the mere existence of such weapons entails for all of humanity.

It is contradictory that certain States continue to pressure — indeed, force — others to focus the attention of the international community on horizontal non-proliferation rather than on nuclear disarmament, notwithstanding the fact that there are still tens of thousands of nuclear weapons jeopardizing the very existence of humankind. The question of proliferation in all its aspects must be resolved by political and diplomatic means, within the context of international law, including the United Nations Charter. The only secure and effective way to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is through their total elimination.

The First Conference of States Parties and Signatories of Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones, held in Mexico City in April, was an event of momentous significance. Cuba, one of the meeting's Vice-Presidents, was actively and constructively involved in both the preparations for and the deliberations at that major conference — including in the negotiations on the final declaration adopted. That involvement is another demonstration of the Cuban Government's firm commitment to multilateralism and its political determination to comply with all its obligations as a State party to both the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, and it shows that Cuba continues to take concrete steps towards that end.

In May, the seventh NPT Review Conference concluded without reaching agreement on substantive agenda items. That is, indeed, regrettable. During the debates and the negotiations held at the Conference it became evident that certain nuclear Powers still lacked the necessary political will to achieve the elimination of nuclear weapons and to ban them permanently. As far as Cuba is concerned, the NPT is not an end in itself; it is but one more step on the path to achieving nuclear disarmament. Cuba firmly rejects once again the use of selectivity and double standards in applying the NPT, which we have seen yet again in recent weeks. In this context we reaffirm our well-known position with respect to the inalienable right of States to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. By the same token, we emphasize that issues related to nuclear disarmament and the peaceful use of nuclear energy cannot continue being relegated to the back burner while front and centre treatment is accorded to horizontal non-proliferation. We can no longer delay the initiation of multilateral negotiations designed to achieve a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument, under which States not possessing nuclear weapons commit themselves not to use or threaten to use such weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States.

As to conventional weapons, we continue to share the humanitarian concerns associated with the unbridled proliferation of small arms and light weapons as well as the indiscriminate and irresponsible use of anti-personnel mines. Moreover, we believe that this Committee should consider in depth and take concrete steps to prevent certain countries from continuing to develop increasingly sophisticated and deadly weapons which cause so-called collateral damage, a phrase used to obscure the innocent victims of such weaponry.

To the United Nations Programme of Action developed in 2001 is now added a political document agreed upon last June after intensive negotiations within the Open-ended Working Group on an International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace in a Timely and Reliable Manner Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. Regrettably, it proved impossible to arrive at a consensus with regard to the adoption of a legally binding text, essentially because of the opposition of the United States Government. Nevertheless, we recognize that that international instrument does represent something of a step forward.

Cuba shares the concern over the risk posed by the linkage between terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. However, we cannot come to grips with this danger through the so-called Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), a non-transparent and selective mechanism which limits itself to fighting horizontal proliferation, while ignoring vertical proliferation and disarmament. A number of elements or principles contained in the PSI are not in keeping with actual practice and would violate the basic principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and with principles recognized in international law. Under the PSI, action could be taken which runs counter to key provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. This kind of initiative erodes multilateralism because it weakens rather than contributes to international unity in dealing with the issue and with strengthening the roles of the United Nations and of international treaties in the disarmament and arms control arenas. We reiterate that the only way to guarantee that weapons of mass destruction do not

fall into the hands of terrorists is to prohibit and totally eliminate such weaponry, particularly nuclear weapons.

Mr. Bouchaara (Morocco), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The phenomenon of terrorism, in any of its manifestations, must be combated without double standards. One cannot go around the world promoting a so-called crusade against international terrorism, including the kind that involves the use of weapons of mass destruction, while providing shelter and impunity to known abominable and self-confessed terrorists such as Luis Posada Carriles on the territory of the country that proclaims itself leader of that crusade.

On this very day, the Cuban people are commemorating the twenty-ninth anniversary of the horrible terrorist act perpetrated by this same Posada Carriles when he attacked a Cuban airliner in mid-flight and caused the death of 73 of its passengers. Cuba favours the creation and indeed the strengthening of an international coalition of all States to prevent the acquisition by terrorists of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, but such an effort must be carried out in the context of international cooperation under the aegis of the United Nations and in accordance with relevant international treaties.

Against that backdrop, however, we view with deep concern the fact that the Security Council continues to arrogate to itself prerogatives and functions it does not have, as was the case with the adoption of resolution 1540 (2004). This deals with an issue that should be and continues to be examined in the context of traditional multilateral disarmament machinery, where there are opportunities for all States to negotiate a legally binding instrument.

As the present year draws to a close, we also have not managed to reactivate the multilateral disarmament machinery; in fact, both the Conference on Disarmament as well as the Disarmament Commission are in a state of paralysis. Many of the resolutions adopted by the First Committee remain unimplemented, particularly those dealing with nuclear disarmament. We reiterate that to overcome this situation we urgently require renewed political support from the international community, particularly by those countries that call into question the priorities laid down during the General Assembly's first special session devoted to disarmament.

The General Assembly, including its First Committee, still lack the required machinery to follow up on the implementation of Assembly resolutions and decisions. The main difficulty this Committee runs into has nothing to do with whether or not its working methods are effective but, rather, with political factors, particularly the lack of political will on the part of certain powerful States, particularly the military super-Power, with respect to moving forward on issues that are of key relevance to international peace and security, including nuclear disarmament.

Mr. Hashem (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): I am pleased, Sir, to convey to you my delegation's congratulations upon your election to the chairmanship of this Committee. I wish also to congratulate the other members of the Bureau. We wish you every success, Sir, as you apply your experience and wisdom to the deliberations of this Committee.

Since the beginning of the new millennium, the world has aspired to translate into reality the agreements reached in the Millennium Declaration so that the inhabitants of the world can live free from fear of deprivation and danger and enjoy peace and security. Despite the five years that have passed since the adoption of the Declaration and the fact that that occasion coincides with the sixtieth anniversary of the United Nations, the situation is still marked by severe doubts due to the failure of the 2005 Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference, held last May, to agree on renewing international commitments made in 1995 and 2000.

The Kingdom of Bahrain believes in the need for international cooperation to rid the world of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and has therefore ratified many conventions, including the 1996 Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty and the NPT to which it acceded on 11 October 1988.

Initiatives on the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones have met with success in certain parts of the world due to the belief on the part of some States in the need to establish peace and stability in these regions. This is a positive step towards the creation of a world free from WMDs. It is very urgent that the Middle East region, including the Arab Gulf, become a WMD-free zone. Our peoples in this region aspire to this. Yet Israel's refusal to accede to the NPT or to subject its nuclear facilities to International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards stands in the way of that objective.

That is the basis of the international community's important responsibility to apply pressure on Israel to ensure that it abides by the relevant international resolutions.

It is regrettable that some nuclear-weapon States are hampering the work of the Conference on Disarmament. All difficulties and obstacles standing in the way of the functioning of the Conference on Disarmament should be eliminated. To that end, objective and pragmatic negotiations should be held in order to achieve the goals of the Conference on Disarmament and to establish a competent ad hoc committee within the Conference to deal with issues of nuclear disarmament.

In that context, the Kingdom of Bahrain supports the 1996 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, which declared that all States are obligated to pursue in good faith negotiations leading to complete nuclear disarmament under strict and effective international control.

Vigorous initiatives to achieve nuclear non-proliferation will help curb the spread of nuclear weapons. The most recent such initiative was Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). In conformity with that resolution, my Government has pledged to submit to the Council a national report on the issue of nuclear weapons.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons remains the cornerstone and mainstay of the non-proliferation regime, in spite of the obstacles posed by the non-accession of some States and the withdrawal or the threat of withdrawal by others. That situation gives the international community cause for concern about the possibility of achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world. Humankind continues to harbour the hope of living in a climate of widespread optimism, in which it can create an international society characterized by security, stability and peaceful coexistence among all States.

Mr. Kaludjerović (Serbia and Montenegro): At the outset, allow me, on behalf of my delegation, to congratulate the Chairman on his election to lead the deliberations of the First Committee. His experience and skill will no doubt lead us to the successful conclusion of the Committee's deliberations at the current session. We also extend our congratulations to the other members of the Bureau.

Serbia and Montenegro aligns itself with the statement made by the United Kingdom on behalf of the European Union. At this point, I would like to make some additional remarks to which my country attaches particular importance.

Despite awareness of the need for any reform of the United Nations system to include reforms in the field of disarmament, it should be noted that there are persisting divisions among States on the priorities and the major challenges to international peace and security. Those divisions, in turn, affect agreement on the appropriate place and role of the United Nations in disarmament matters in the present day. The recently concluded High-level Plenary Meeting no doubt made some positive breakthroughs in the field of peace and security. However, we concur with the Secretary-General's assessment that it is a considerable disappointment that the issue of disarmament and non-proliferation was not mentioned in the outcome document. We expect that the present session will take concrete steps to overcome differences in this area, and thereby fully justify the concept of multilateralism.

The significance of the United Nations disarmament framework for peace and security in the world has rarely been as much at the centre of attention as it is now, as a result, in particular, of the growing threat of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their possible acquisition by terrorists. The linkages between nuclear proliferation, new forms of terrorism and transnational criminal networks constitute a real threat to international peace and security and require a collective response by the international community.

Serbia and Montenegro is truly committed to making its full contribution to all regional and global initiatives related to the fight against terrorism. Last month, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia and Montenegro signed the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, adding it to the 12 anti-terrorism conventions it has already ratified. It is of utmost significance that in the 2005 World Summit Outcome, heads of State and Government "strongly condemn terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, committed by whomever, wherever and for whatever purposes" (*resolution 60/1, para. 81*), and we support the Secretary-General's identification of elements of a counter-terrorism strategy.

We are particularly concerned by another problem that affects stability in our region: the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and its direct connection to organized crime and terrorism. That problem is particularly acute in the territory of Serbia's autonomous province of Kosovo and Metohija, which is temporarily administered by the United Nations. We are of the view that, to resolve that problem, we need to ensure full implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons, in particular by strengthening export controls and regional and international cooperation.

We therefore attach great importance to the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons, and we submit national information on the Programme's implementation on an annual basis. In cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme, preparations are under way to establish a coordinating body to facilitate the implementation of the project of assistance to Serbia and Montenegro for strengthening the control of small arms and light weapons. The State Union law on foreign sales of arms, military equipment and dual-purpose goods was adopted in February 2005 and entered into force in March. The law on hand-held firearms, devices and ammunition testing is already in force. A law on arms and military equipment production is in preparation, and it is expected that a draft of the law will be submitted to the Union Parliament for adoption by the end of 2005.

In line with the binding provisions of the Ottawa Convention on Landmines, Serbia and Montenegro recently started implementation of the project to completely destroy its anti-personnel mine stockpiles. In August 2005, in cooperation with the NATO Maintenance and Supply Agency and with Canada, the technical aspect of the destruction of anti-personnel mines was undertaken. We are convinced that by 2010, we shall attain the goal of proclaiming South-East Europe a zone free of anti-personnel mines.

At the same time, Serbia and Montenegro expects that the final document of the 2004 Nairobi Review Conference of the States Parties to the Ottawa Convention will prove to be a necessary contribution to the international community's activities over the next five years in other important areas covered by the Convention such as humanitarian demining and the rehabilitation and the psychological and social reintegration of the victims of anti-personnel mines. In that context, States and civil society partners will convene next month in Zagreb, Croatia, to review progress in implementing the far-reaching Action Plan adopted at last year's Nairobi Summit on a Mine-Free World.

As a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), Serbia and Montenegro supports efforts to achieve its full implementation. Unfortunately, the NPT Review Conference in May did not achieve substantive results, but exposed the weaknesses of the non-proliferation regime. That is why we have to redouble our efforts to promote nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation as an important item on the international community's agenda.

In addition, we favour the promotion of a comprehensive nuclear weapons ban and the pursuit of nuclear disarmament, while permitting peaceful uses of nuclear energy under a strict International Atomic Energy Agency verification regime.

Serbia and Montenegro deposited its instruments of ratification for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) in May 2004 and, as a non-nuclear-weapon State, supports all regional and multilateral meetings that stress the importance of the Treaty and which accelerate the ratification process. At the level of the State Union, a procedure has been initiated to devise a model to coordinate activities related to the implementation of the Treaty. We support the Final Declaration of the fourth Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT, held in New York in September. Despite the difficulties of the ratification process, we must continue to promote the Treaty. To that end, it is crucial to adopt the Final Declaration, which will focus attention on the CTBT and the need to bring it into force. The Conference's Declaration is a qualitative step forward and provides a solid base for our future endeavours.

Serbia and Montenegro fully honours the provisions of the Biological Weapons Convention and considers that, 30 years after the Convention's adoption, it is necessary to put in place a verification regime for the Convention, thereby enabling a uniform approach to the prevention of the proliferation of biological and toxin weapons. We are making efforts, in cooperation with individual European Union member States, to respond most effectively to the

challenges that may arise in the wake of the use of such weapons.

As a current member of the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Serbia and Montenegro supports all efforts to eliminate stockpiles of such weapons. As a sign of its commitment to the Convention, Serbia and Montenegro eliminated and destroyed all its stockpiles and relevant installations by the year 2004.

The Chairman returned to the Chair.

On 14 September 2005, Serbia and Montenegro aligned itself with the statement of the United Kingdom, Chair of the European Union, at the Madrid meeting at which Spain assumed the presidency of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR). Although not a member of the MTCR, we voluntarily committed ourselves to complying with some MTCR documents.

As one of the five parties to the Agreement on Subregional Arms Control — article IV, annex 1 B of the Dayton Agreement — Serbia and Montenegro consistently implements the provisions of the Agreement, destroys surplus weapon stockpiles and directs its efforts towards fulfilling the requirements for full-fledged membership in Euro-Atlantic integration.

Let me conclude, Mr. Chairman, by expressing our support for your initiative to improve the efficiency of the work of the First Committee. We hope that during the current session of the Committee, we will be able to jointly find a way in which to improve its work so that it can respond more efficiently to the new challenges faced by the international community in the field of disarmament and international security.

Mrs. Núñez de Odremán (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela congratulates you, Mr. Chairman, and the other members of the Bureau on your election. We wish you every success in the work now under way.

Our delegation aligns itself the statements made by the representative of Argentina on behalf of the Rio Group and by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. However, we should like to highlight the position of the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on certain aspects of disarmament and international security.

Our international actions in that area follow the guidelines of the foreign policy enshrined in the Constitution of 1999, the Organic Law of National Security and Defence and the 2001-2007 national economic and social development plan. Among these, we wish to highlight the promotion of a multipolar world, cooperation with developing countries, the fostering of confidence and security in the region and the implementation of a new comprehensive national and regional Latin American security regime characterized by a multidimensional approach and a concept of security that is non-offensive, cooperative and based on the economic, social, cultural and military development of peoples.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, committed to general and complete disarmament — an objective enshrined in its Constitution — has always supported measures taken by the international community within the framework of the United Nations to achieve the elimination of nuclear weapons, the only way in which to avoid a nuclear war or accident. That is why we aspire to the objective of universalizing the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We support the negotiations on a multilaterally and legally binding instrument whereby the nuclear Powers would fully commit themselves not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear States and to act in accordance with article VI of the NPT by reducing their nuclear strength for the benefit of international peace and security. That is crucial in a world divided between States that possess nuclear weapons and those that do not and have, moreover, renounced the manufacture, acquisition and use of such weapons.

We believe that nuclear-weapon States must implement and comply with the 13 practical measures aimed at total and complete disarmament listed in the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT and halt programmes to develop new nuclear weapons. At the same time, we defend the inalienable right of countries to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

With regard to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, Venezuela is making its contribution by installing two seismological stations on its territory as part of the International Monitoring System of the global verification regime established under that instrument.

However, we wish to express our deep concern at the disarmament and non-proliferation initiatives that have recently emerged outside the context of the United Nations, such as the Proliferation Security Initiative and the Global Threat Reduction Initiative, launched by the United States of America in 2003 and 2004, respectively. Likewise, we note with reservations the possibility that disarmament and non-proliferation issues will be transferred to the Security Council, a forum in which all States do not participate on an equal footing. An example of that trend was the Security Council's adoption, in April 2004, of resolution 1540 (2004) on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Our country does not possess chemical weapons, but we have a major chemical and petrochemical industrial complex. That is why we have to submit annual declarations to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) on the importation, exploration and sale of certain chemical products considered as having dedicated uses under the Chemical Weapons Convention. In 2004 and 2005, we submitted to the Director-General of that organization declarations elaborated by the Ministry of Light Industries and Trade, and we wish to stress that the OPCW held its first inspection in Venezuela from 30 November to 3 December 2004. The verification activities took place at the El Tablazo petrochemical complex, and the inspectors' report was positive.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has also complied with the provisions of article 4 of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. On 24 September 2003, we completed the destruction of 47,189 mines in the arsenals of the National Armed Forces, leaving only a small quantity for training exercises. On 4 July 2005, we submitted our annual report on the implementation of the Convention for the period May 2003-June 2005. Our country also contributes to the demining process in Central America by sending military experts to the Assistance Mission for Mine Clearance in Central America. In addition, we are pleased to report that on 19 April 2005, we deposited our instrument of accession to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May be Deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, as well as to its Protocols I, II and III.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela does not possess ballistic missiles. However, in support of the international community's efforts to fill the legal vacuum in that area, we signed the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation at The Hague on 25 November 2002.

Our country believes that outer space must be declared a common heritage of humanity and that States must use it for peaceful purposes and share with humanity the benefits that can be obtained from it in areas such as environmental monitoring and improving telecommunications systems. We consider the geostationary orbit to be a limited natural resource subject to saturation and therefore that it must be used on the basis of the principle of rational and equitable access for all countries. In that connection, in December 2004 we established, on a temporary basis, the Venezuelan Presidential Commission for the Peaceful Use of Space in order to study, assess and formulate proposals enabling us to advise the national executive in decision-making in this area and in the creation of a standing body that would both guide and serve the State in the area of space.

Our country's view is that the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons intensifies violent acts and, in many countries, hampers efforts aimed at resolving conflicts and problems, such as felonies in general, organized crime, drug trafficking and terrorism. Therefore, our country has joined multilateral efforts to fight this problem.

We would like to highlight that in May of this year our National Assembly passed legislation adopting the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, adopted on 31 May 2001 (resolution 55/255). We have been continuing to carry out measures under the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, and we reaffirm our appreciation that this is indeed an excellent tool for tackling the problem.

At the regional level, we are complying with the norms set forth in the Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials, ratified in April 2005. Subregionally, we are

participating in the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR) working group on firearms, along with associated States, and support the Andean Community's decision 552, setting out the Andean Plan to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all Its Aspects.

At the domestic level, we adopted a disarmament law in 2002 and drew up legislation to protect and monitor arsenals and arms and munitions depots. In addition, the Venezuelan Criminal Code establishes five- to eight-year prison terms for those involved in marketing, importing and transporting illegal firearms. On the basis of this legislation, we have seized and decommissioned illegal weapons and publicly destroyed a total of approximately 43,000 tons of such armaments. The money received from selling this melted down material has gone into a foundation to help those injured by firearms.

Moreover, our country wishes to stress that ammunition is an inseparable element from the problem of the accumulation, transfer and illegal use of small arms and light weapons and therefore, measures taken to control the use of this kind of weaponry will be inadequate if they do not include the matter of ammunition.

As to dumping nuclear or radioactive waste and the grave consequences this has on the environment and human well being, Venezuela considers it fundamental that scientific and technological advances in the framework of disarmament and international security must be applied without prejudice to the environment and must contribute effectively to sustainable development. We support the transfer and exchange of the latest technical and scientific knowledge, not only as they relate to disarmament, but also as they can contribute to the fight against threats to security.

Finally, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela wishes to speak out again to confirm the clear-cut and daily threat now posed to international security by State terrorism. This is acknowledged conceptually within the United Nations through General Assembly resolution 39/159, adopted on 17 December 1984, which "Resolutely condemns policies and practices of terrorism in relations between States as a method of dealing with other States and peoples" (*para. 1*) and

> "Demands that all States take no actions aimed at military intervention and occupation, forcible change in or undermining of the socio-political system of States, destabilization and overthrow of their Governments and, in particular, initiate no military action to that end under any pretext whatsoever and cease forthwith any such action already in progress." (*para. 2*)

In dealing with this issue, we endorse what the representative of Cuba said, when he reminded us of the twenty-ninth anniversary of a terrorist act that shocked world public opinion — namely, the blowing-up of a Cubana de Aviación aircraft filled with young athletes who had departed from Venezuela. One of the perpetrators of this act, Luis Posada Carriles, a Venezuelan, is now residing in the United States. We hope that he will be extradited to Venezuela by the Government of the United States, as requested, so that he can be brought to justice to answer for the crime he committed 29 years ago.

Moreover, we want to alert the international community to the development of new doctrines that imply the threat or the use of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, as well as the tactical use of such weapons under conditions of asymmetric conflict, for the purpose of repressing the popular uprising of peoples. Among these kinds of weapons worthy of our attention are recent developments relating to the Spanish flu virus that struck the world in 1918 and which is extraordinarily similar to the avian flu, the harmful effects of which could be modified for use by the military.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela will continue to proclaim its commitment to peace and continue actively participating within the United Nations system and in the field of disarmament and international security to further the advent of a multipolar world that would bring about a safer, more peaceful, more prosperous world for our peoples.

Once again, Sir, we wish you success in the performance of your work at the helm of the First Committee, and we offer you our cooperation in doing so.

Mrs. Bonilla Galvão de Queiroz (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): May I congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee at the present session of the General Assembly. We also extend our congratulations to the other members of the Bureau. We thank the delegation

of Argentina for its detailed statement on behalf of the Rio Group, which we fully endorse. However, my delegation deems it timely now to make additional observations about some points that we believe to be relevant.

Our meetings here in the First Committee are being held at a time that could not be more opportune, taking place as they do at the close of a year in which the problems in the arena of disarmament and non-proliferation have loomed large but where the expectations of the international community in that regard have not been fulfilled. We are witnessing a paralysis reflected in our work and in the impossibility of reaching consensus-based positions. Clear differences in terms of the concepts, priorities and approaches to security have cast a shadow on our basic aspiration, which is for the Assembly to fully and effectively use the powers conferred upon it under Article 11, paragraph 1, of the Charter — namely, with regard to the principles governing disarmament and the regulation of arms.

This year has witnessed more than one missed opportunity in our arena. The Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) failed to adopt a substantive final document that would reflect our determination to control the use and proliferation of nuclear weapons and contain an unequivocal commitment to eliminating them. Once again, the Disarmament Commission was not able even to come up with a programme of work, which made it impossible for it to fill its mandate to deliberate on issues in the disarmament arena. And, to top it all, the subject of disarmament and international security was most conspicuously absent from the 2005 Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1).

These developments demonstrate the seriousness of the deadlock to which we have returned, and they should alert us to take action in this regard. We must propose ways to obtain better understanding and better cooperation in order to achieve better results in using the machinery available to us. Traditional and new kinds of security problems in the spheres of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation deserve equal attention. If we are to overcome these problems, new commitments, time and effort are required. It is our duty to dedicate ourselves to doing all that is necessary towards that end and the duty of the United Nations to provide the needed leadership.

A first step in the direction of realizing this new vision in the sphere of disarmament and non-proliferation is reflected in the document submitted by Norway on behalf of seven countries. It presents an across-the-board commitment and strikes a timely balance that may initiate a new dialogue promoting consensus in this regard.

The area of conventional weapons also deserves our full attention and concerted efforts. In the short term, we are looking to the first United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, to be held in July 2006. This will provide a new opportunity for us to work on a multilateral basis to reconcile our conflicting interests and focus on the problem of small arms and light weapons, which affects all of us.

Guatemala shares the view that the 2001 Programme of Action should be strengthened through the elaboration of effective international regulations on small arms and light weapons, ultimately aimed at promoting global security. In this respect, we share the near-unanimous dismay with regard to the limited scope of the recently concluded international instrument on the marking and tracing of small arms and light weapons, the character and objectives of which do not respond to the needs of the countries that are hardest hit. We had hoped that that instrument would complement the commitments that we have already assumed under the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials. However, we look forward to being able to correct the situation at a later date. We must strive for better results on the basis of the other provisions in the Programme of Action, which, global in scope, have not yet been taken up.

Guatemala reaffirms its full support for the Ottawa Convention and the effective implementation of the far-reaching Nairobi Action Plan for the period 2004-2009. The forthcoming meeting, to be held in Zagreb, will provide an opportunity for us to reaffirm our commitment to preserving the humanitarian objectives of the Convention.

Guatemala shares the view of those who believe that there is a need to take a new approach to collective

security worldwide. Such an approach would enable us to overcome the difficulties that we have encountered when attempting to respond in an effective manner to old and new challenges to international security. One opportunity to review such a new approach will be provided by the meetings scheduled to be held in 2006 in preparation for the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. We trust that we will be able to derive maximum benefit from them.

In conclusion, we would like to thank the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean for the willingness that it so clearly demonstrated to help Guatemala to destroy many small arms and light weapons, as provided for in the 2001 Programme of Action.

Mr. Shein (Myanmar): I have the honour and privilege to take the floor on behalf of the countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN): Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Viet Nam and my own country, Myanmar.

At the outset, I wish to extend our warmest congratulations to you, Sir, on your unanimous election as Chairman of the First Committee. We are delighted to see a distinguished diplomat from our region chairing this important Committee. We pay tribute also to the other members of the Bureau. I assure you of the fullest cooperation and support of the ASEAN delegations.

While we welcome the recently concluded High-level Plenary Meeting, we are disappointed that its outcome document failed to make any reference to disarmament and non-proliferation. We hope that the follow-up process on the outcome document will be held in a transparent, inclusive and open-ended manner.

The ASEAN countries reaffirm their support for the unanimous conclusion of the International Court of Justice, in an advisory opinion of 8 July 1996, that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control. In this regard, the ASEAN countries continue to support, and intend to sponsor, the draft resolution, introduced every year by Malaysia, reaffirming that important ruling.

For a number of years, the ASEAN countries have sponsored the yearly draft resolutions, initiated by my country, calling upon the nuclear-weapon States to stop immediately the qualitative improvement, development, production and stockpiling of nuclear warheads and their delivery systems. Those two draft resolutions form part of the ASEAN members' contributions to the cause of disarmament. This year, Malaysia and Myanmar, with the support of ASEAN and other sponsors, will re-introduce those draft resolutions. It is our ardent hope that the draft resolutions will enjoy broader support and increased sponsorship.

The ASEAN countries have consistently stressed the importance of achieving universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT). We reiterate our call to the nuclear-weapon States to make further efforts towards the elimination of all nuclear weapons.

We welcome the Final Declaration of the fourth Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT, held in New York over the past two weeks, as well as measures to promote its early entry into force. We also reiterate the importance of the 12 concrete measures adopted at the previous Conference, held in Vienna in September 2003. As a region that was affected severely by the tsunami at the end of last year, we are delighted to see the initiative to make maximum use of the CTBT verification system for scientific and civil benefits, including for tsunami warning systems.

We regret that the 2005 NPT Review Conference, held in New York in May, did not achieve any substantive result. We urge all the parties concerned to demonstrate their political will to overcome their differences of view and work for concerted action on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

We emphasize the importance of the full and non-selective implementation of the NPT in the areas of nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy, and welcome the positive outcome of the 2000 Review Conference. The ASEAN countries also welcome the unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals, leading to nuclear disarmament, to which all

States parties are committed under article VI of the NPT. We reiterate our view that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. We therefore call once again for the full and effective implementation of the practical steps set out in the 2000 Final Document. In this connection, we reaffirm our conviction that there exists an urgent need for the nuclear-weapon States to take concrete measures to fulfil their obligations under the NPT.

We continue to believe that the concerns related to missile proliferation are best addressed through multilaterally negotiated, comprehensive and non-discriminatory agreements. We will work together with Member States to contribute to the United Nations endeavour to address the issue of missiles in all its aspects by identifying areas where consensus can be reached, including the establishment in 2007 of a panel of governmental experts on missiles.

We take note of the decision of the fifth Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) that the States parties should meet annually in the lead-up to the sixth Review Conference in 2006, and that a meeting of experts should be held prior to each annual meeting.

We welcome the convening of the second annual meeting of the States parties in Geneva in December 2004, and urge them to continue to develop their own national capacities for response, investigation and mitigation with regard to infectious and deliberate diseases. We also welcome the convening, at Geneva in June 2005, of the third Meeting of Experts from States Parties, and commend their efforts to develop and implement the codes of conduct in order to prevent the deliberate or inadvertent misuse of science for purposes contrary to the BWC.

We also take note of the convening, at The Hague in November 2004, of the ninth Session of the Conference of States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), and reaffirm our commitment to the provisions of the verification regime of the CWC. We further underline the urgency of resolving outstanding issues with a view to paving the way for the effective, full and non-discriminatory implementation of the Convention.

The ASEAN countries note with appreciation the positive result of the second Biennial Meeting of States on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects, held in New York in July 2005.

We welcome the intention to adopt, during the sixtieth session of the General Assembly, an international instrument to enable States to identify and trace, in a timely and reliable manner, illicit small arms and light weapons. We are of the view that the adoption of such an instrument is closely related to other disarmament efforts, in particular the total elimination of all weapons of mass destruction, which, we believe, should be given adequate attention by the international community.

We extend our deep appreciation to the Government of Mexico for hosting the Conference of States Parties and Signatories to Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones, held in Tlatelolco from 26 to 28 April 2005. We welcome the declaration adopted at that Conference, and we are convinced that the measures it contains can serve as a basis to strengthen the nuclear-weapon-free-zone regime and contribute to disarmament and non-proliferation processes, in particular, the evaluation of methods of cooperation for achieving the universal goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

The ASEAN countries have successfully established a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South-East Asia. The Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone entered into force on 27 March 1997. A protocol is annexed to the Treaty for accession by nuclear-weapon States. For the Treaty to become fully operational and effective, it is essential that nuclear-weapon States sign the Protocol at an early date. In that context, we welcome the readiness of China to sign the Protocol. The States Parties to the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone welcome the Chinese gesture and reiterate their wish to see all five nuclear-weapon States sign the Protocol.

Mindful of rapidly unfolding events affecting international peace and security, we reaffirm our support for convening a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, with the participation of all United Nations Member States, as well as the need for such a session to review and assess implementation of the final document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament and to reaffirm its principles and priorities.

The ASEAN countries continue to attach special importance to confidence-building efforts among the countries in the region. The ASEAN Regional Forum has steadfastly undertaken concrete measures to enhance regional security through various initiatives. The ASEAN Regional Forum also welcomed the enhancement of interfaith dialogues aimed at promoting mutual understanding and trust among the peoples in the region.

We are gratified that the Regional Forum has also recognized the purpose and principles of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in the South-East Asia, which can serve as a very important code of conduct governing inter-State relations in the region and for the promotion of cooperation, amity and friendship within South-East Asia and between ASEAN and other ASEAN Regional Forum participants. We also welcome the recent accession to the Treaty by Mongolia and New Zealand and Australia's declaration in July 2005 of its intent to accede to the Treaty. In that connection, we call on non-South-East Asian countries to consider acceding to the Treaty.

We reaffirm the importance of the Conference on Disarmament as the sole multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament. We are, however, disappointed and concerned by the continuing impasse in the Conference on Disarmament and note with regret that the Conference on Disarmament was still unable to reach an agreement on the programme of work at its 2005 session. It is our hope that the States concerned will demonstrate their commitment to the process of disarmament and demonstrate the political will to overcome that deadlock and reach an amicable solution in the near future.

We renew once again our commitment to multilateralism as an important means of pursuing and achieving our common objectives in the field of disarmament and our determination to further promote multilateralism in that respect.

It is now more urgent than ever for us, the international community, to strive for international peace and security and redouble our efforts to live up to our commitment to the goal of creating a nuclear-weapon-free world. We, the ASEAN countries, once again reaffirm our commitment to work cooperatively to achieve those goals as a matter of utmost priority.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.